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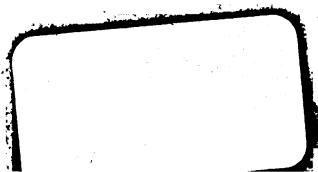
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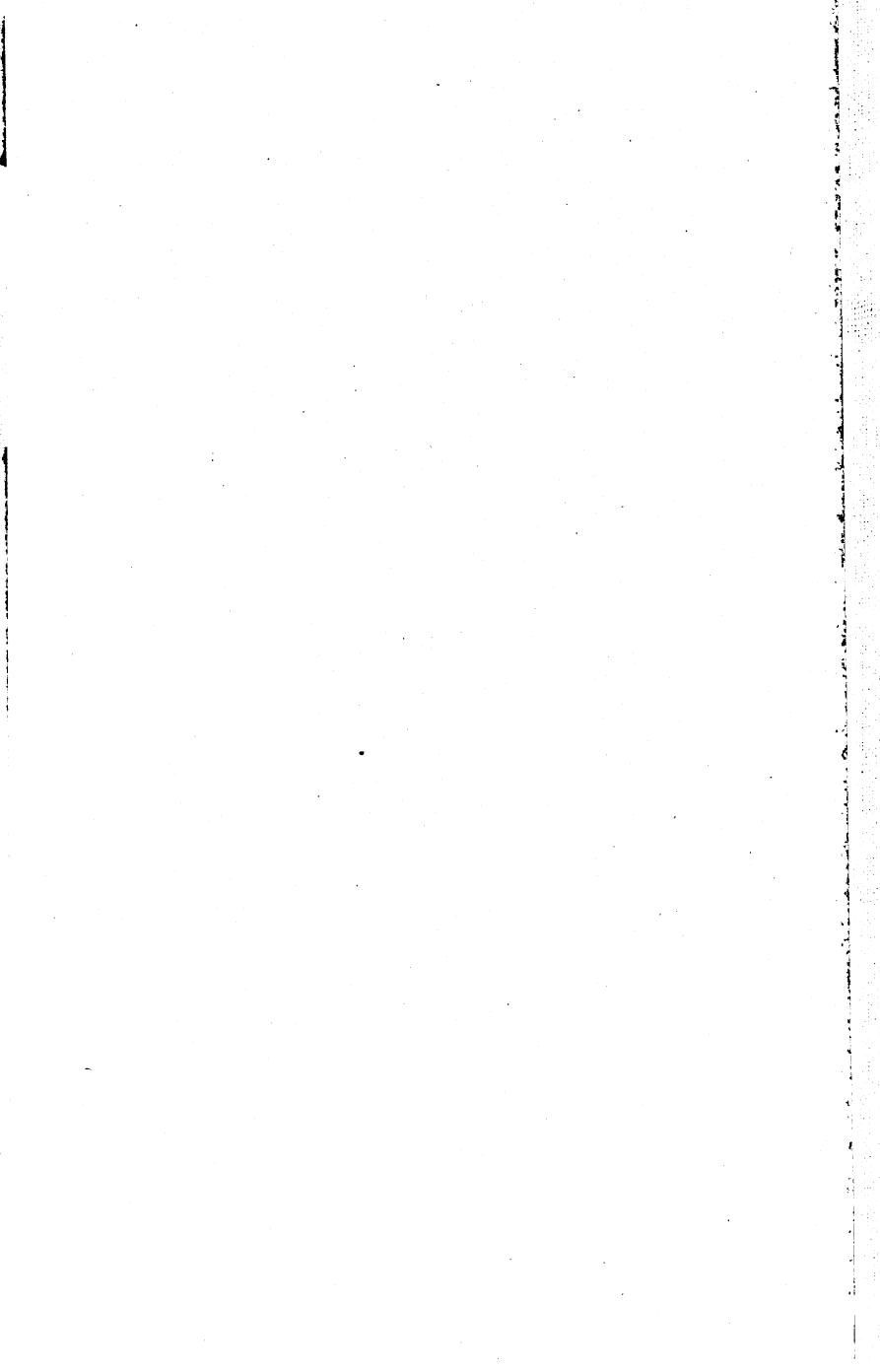
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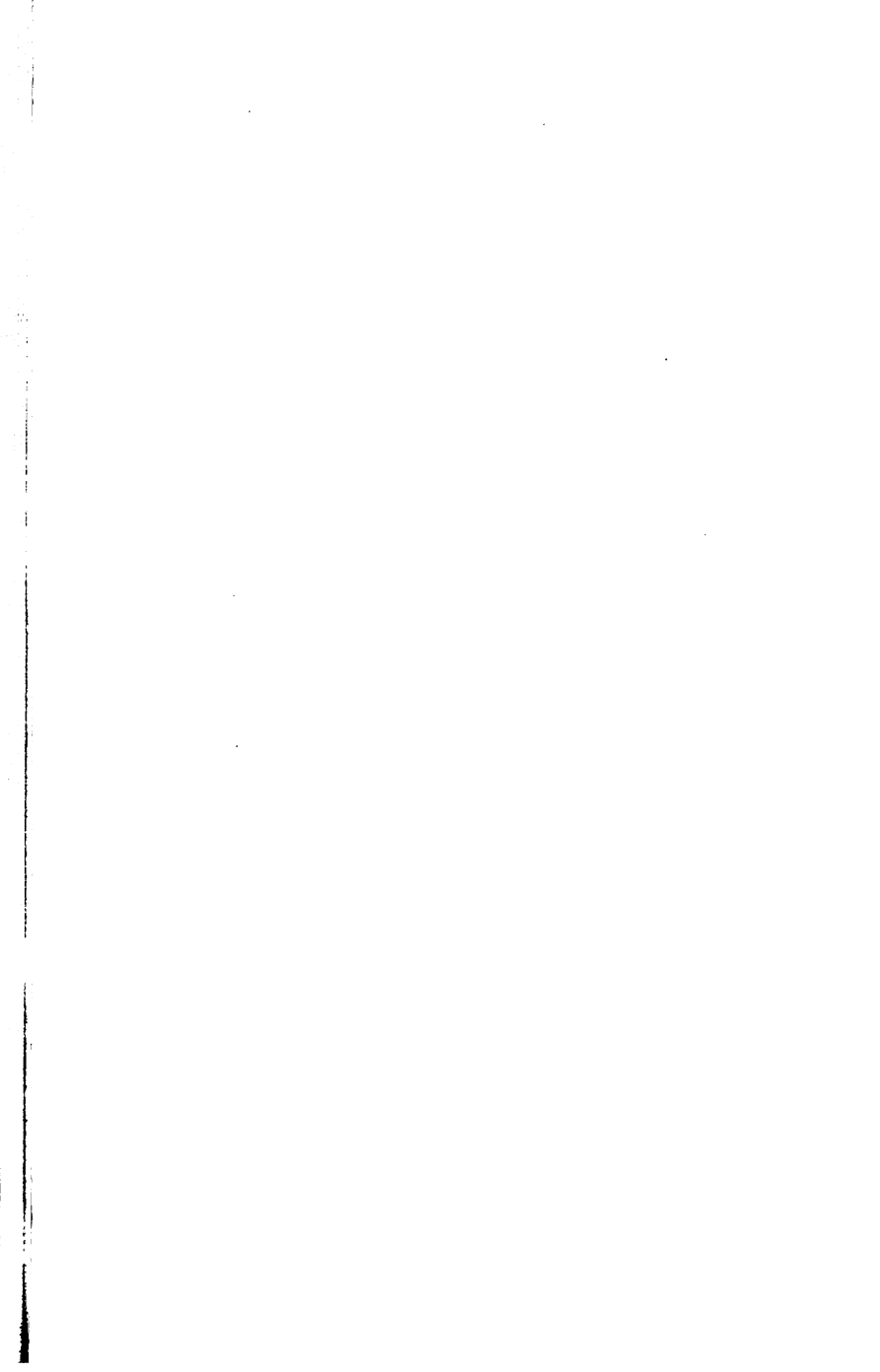


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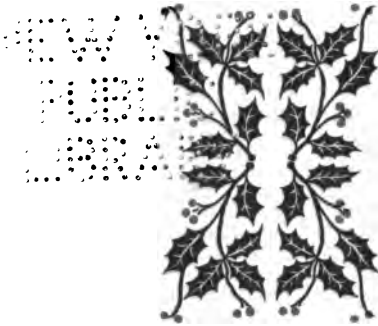


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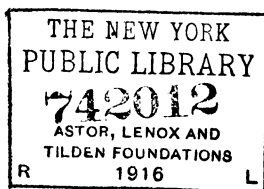
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*Lyrics & Legends of Christmas-Tide*



## A Bell

Had I the power  
To cast a bell that should from some grand tower,  
At the first Christmas hour,  
Out-ring,  
And fling  
A jubilant message wide,  
The forgèd metals should be thus allied ; —  
No iron Pride,  
But soft Humility and rich-veined Hope  
Cleft from a sunny slope,  
And there should be  
White Charity,  
And silvery Love, that knows nor Doubt nor Fear,  
To make the peal more clear ;  
And then, to firmly fix the fine alloy,  
There should be Joy !



## Christmas Elves

If you walk on Christmas eve,  
And the moon doth shine aright,  
You will see them weave, —  
Nimble gnome, and fay and sprite, —  
Devious dances in the lustrous lunar light.

Round and round the holly bole  
Will they dart and glide and spring;  
And a tripping troll  
Will they in a chorus sing;  
Threading now in broken, now in linkèd ring.

*Berry bright, berry bright,  
Be the love about your hearth!  
Leafy green, leafy green,  
Be perennial your mirth!  
Sturdy as a holly bole be your footing of the earth!*

These white spirits of old Yule,  
Happy you who hear their tune!  
Joy with you shall rule,  
Life for you shall be a boon  
Round the year through all the watches of the moon!

## The Christmas Angel

In middle heaven a form behold ;  
Fair-aureoled  
Her shapely brow with noon-bright gold ;  
*Soli Deo Gloria !*

Upon a little cloud she stands,  
Within her hands  
A tympanum with scarlet bands ;  
*Soli Deo Gloria !*

Thereon she playeth without fault,  
While up the vault  
Her voice makes silvery assault —  
*Soli Deo Gloria !*

Till, blended with her soaring notes,  
Adown there floats  
An echo from a myriad throats —  
*Soli Deo Gloria !*

An angel she of God's own choir,  
Whose one desire  
Is higher yet to chant, and higher —  
*Soli Deo Gloria !*

And every year, upon the morn  
When Christ was born  
Within the manger-bed forlorn —  
*Soli Deo Gloria!*

'T is hers to bid song's raptures run  
From sun to sun,  
And list to earth's low antiphon —  
*Soli Deo Gloria!*

Would that our praise might swell and rise  
Along the skies,  
And scale the gates of Paradise —  
*Soli Deo Gloria!*

Bearing, with more complete accord,  
Unto the Lord,—  
Forevermore our watch and ward,—  
*Soli Deo Gloria!*

## Nazareth Town

Nazareth town in Galilee !  
Set where the paths lead up from the sea  
That like the chords of a mighty lyre  
Dirges over the rocks of Tyre,  
Mourns where the piers of Sidon shone,  
And the battlements cinctured Ascalon.  
They have waned as the sunset wanes ;  
Little more than a name remains ;  
But more than a name we hold it, — we, —  
Nazareth town in Galilee !

Nazareth town in Galilee !  
Ah, what a golden harmony  
The dawn seems, flooding its bright white walls !  
And, when the violet twilight falls,  
What a vast processional of stars  
Pageants over its stilled bazaars !  
And when the full moon touches the height  
Of Tabor, a torch of brilliant light,  
Never was sight more fair to see ; —  
Nazareth town in Galilee !

Nazareth town in Galilee !  
Strumming a desert melody,  
The Bedouin minstrel trolls in the street ;  
At the Well of the Virgin the maidens meet ;  
The cactus-hedges crimson to flower,  
And the olives silver hour by hour  
As through their branches the south wind steals ;  
A clear bell peals, and a vulture wheels  
Over the crest where the wild crags be ; —  
Nazareth town in Galilee !

Nazareth town in Galilee !  
At the sound of the words how memory  
Kindles as earth does under the spring,  
Till the dead days rise for our visioning ;  
And out of them one compassionate face  
Beams with a more than mortal grace ;  
Out of them one inspiring voice  
Cries in the ears of the world "rejoice !"   
And ever a beacon of hope shall be  
Nazareth town in Galilee !

## A Christmas Masque

### FIRST KING

I am the monarch Melchior,  
Mighty alike in peace and war.

### SECOND KING

I am the sovereign Balthasar ;  
A myriad fold my liegemen are.

### THIRD KING

The royal ruler Jasper, I,  
Lord of a spacious empery.

### FIRST KING

Yet do I seek a little child, —

### SECOND KING

A tiny nursling undefiled ;

### THIRD KING

And I am one likewise beguiled.

### FIRST KING

To Him whose coming stars foretold, —  
A babe divine in mortal mould, —  
I bear this goodly gift of gold.

### SECOND KING

To Him whose life shall ease the sting  
Of mankind's weary travailing,  
This fragrant frankincense I bring.

### THIRD KING

To Him whose loving words shall stir  
To aspirations holier,  
My offering is this precious myrrh.

### ALL

Piercing the mists of time, we see  
The cruel cross, the agony,  
And, whelmed with pity, bend the knee.

Piercing the mists of time, we gaze  
Adown the future's opening ways,  
And hear the swelling prayer and praise.

Piercing the mists of time, we hail  
The day when woe and sin shall fail,  
And over all His love prevail.

## A Song for Christmas Morning

O wear for garment mirth  
Upon the soul,  
As all the fields of earth  
Wear one white stole!  
A dream of things long gone  
Let sorrow be:  
Turn thou thine eyes on dawn,  
Thy heart on glee!

What wonder everywhere  
Above, abroad!  
The amplitudes of air  
Abrim with God.  
His presence shining through  
The risen sun,  
And in the bending blue  
His benison.

Into the gulfs of gloom  
Go death and night;  
Behold around thee bloom  
Glad life and light!  
The veil of darkness drawn,  
Thy vision free,  
Turn thou thy soul on dawn,  
Exultingly!



## The Christmas Minstrels

Now that the joy-day of the year is nearing,  
In that fair sun-land set 'twixt sea and sea,  
From hill and mountain dale behold appearing  
With jocund strains a minstrel company.

The reeds that shepherds played in eras olden,  
These are the tuneful pipes whereon they blow ;  
The sky that over-arches is the golden,  
The bright Calabrian sky of long ago.

And since the decades of the saints and sages,  
When here to Christ was first raised prayerful praise,  
These minstrel men through all the echoing ages  
Have heralded the hallowed Christmas days.

From lonely shrines on steep and stony byways  
Their clear wild music up the pathway soars ;  
It gushes like a fount on traveled highways,  
And through the populous piazza pours.

They cling to their old ways, these simple-hearted  
And humble dwellers on the uplands high ;  
Their notes, an echo of the days departed,  
Span gulfs of time, and bring the dead years nigh.

Long may the cool Calabrian laurel alleys  
Hearken the strains, in rarer ether born,  
Of minstrels wending down the mountain valleys  
To greet the coming of the Christmas morn !

## Twelfth Night Song

Heaped be the fagots high,  
And the half-burnèd bough  
From last year's revelry  
Be litten now !  
Brimmed be the posset bowl  
For every lusty soul ;  
And while the maskers rule,  
Cry ' Noel ! ' cry ' Noel ! ' down all the halls of Yule !  
  
O eager viols, thrill !  
Pipe, hautboys, clear and sweet !  
Work your impetuous will,  
Ye restless feet !  
For every lip — a glass !  
For every lad — a lass !  
And, ere the ardors cool,  
Cry ' Noel ! ' cry ' Noel ! ' down all the halls of Yule !

## Yule at Thengelfor

It was Yule at Thengelfor, —  
The sharp white tide of Yule ;  
And the mailed Thanes of War,  
Bred in the fiery school  
Of the devotees of Thor,  
Flung into the council-hall  
With sneer and clamorous call  
At the calm-browed Thanes of Peace  
Who worshiped without cease, —  
Bending in prayer the knee  
To the One of Galilee  
Who died, as they said, for all.

Each man stood in his place  
That sharp white noon of Yule,  
And the War-Thanes hooted "fool,"  
And "coward" and "craven knave ;"  
And they flashed, each one, a glaive  
In every Peace-Thane's face.  
But the Peace-Thanes were not cowed,  
Smiling their quiet smile  
At the flaunts and threats and jeers  
Roaring about their ears ;

And they held them poised and proud,  
Till, after a breathing while,  
The tumult died like the sea  
Subsiding sullenly  
Around the breast of an isle  
Set at the last fiord's verge,  
Fronting the western surge.

Then into the council-hall  
Where Peace confronted War,—  
Where Christ confronted Thor,—  
Dauntless, willowy, tall,  
Came a maid of Thengelfor,—  
The Princess. Ah, how fair  
Was the sunrise sheen of her hair,  
More wondrous to behold  
Than her coronet of gold !  
And she paused between them there,  
As white as the Yule was white,  
Till a hush fell on the air  
Like the hush of the middle night.  
And she said, "What stand ye for?"  
To the mailed Thanes of War;  
And they shouted shrill, "For Thor,  
And the kingdom's olden might!"

Then she turned her, level-eyed,  
To the Peace-Thanes. "Ye?" she cried;  
As in one voice they replied,  
"For Christ, and the rule of right!"

"Thor and the war and might!"  
Thus she mused for a space;  
"Christ and peace and the right!"  
And a glory mantled her face.  
"Better the right than might,  
Ye valiant Thanes of War!  
Blood now the Yule is white?  
Nay, 'twere a grievous sight! —  
Better the Christ than Thor!"

And ever and evermore  
By the Baltic's rugged shore,  
In the halls of Thengelfor,  
Right not might is the rule,  
The Christ and not sanguine Thor  
At the sharp white tide of Yule!

## A Yule-Tide Carol

O lightly lift thy finger,  
Thou loving lutanist,  
And let around us linger  
Thy music's mellow mist !  
Aye, let the strain beat faster  
In captivating time,  
And mirth shall be our master  
Until the midnight chime !  
  
Noel ! — hang high the holly  
While leaps the Yule-log's light ;  
We'll drive gray Melancholy  
Abroad into the night !

With silvery touch and tingle,  
Like brooks 'twixt sunny swards,  
Each soaring voice shall mingle  
And marry with the chords ;  
So shall the liquid laughter  
Of mirth and music rule,  
Till rings the roof-tree's rafter  
With revelries of Yule.

Noel ! — hang high the holly,  
And twine the ivy-tod ;  
My merries, we'll be jolly,  
And spurn care like a clod !

## Ballad of the Eve of Yule

It was hard on the tide of Yule,  
And the wind bit shrewd and sharp,  
Churning the river pool,  
And turning the deep-wood boughs,  
That were wont to droop and drowse,  
To the moaning strings of a harp.

A snow-threat gloomed the sky,  
And with iterant, raucous caw  
A bevy of rooks went by,  
Each a seeming thing  
Of evil, ominous wing  
Flapping adown the flaw.

Then night fell over the fen,  
And he mused, still stumbling on,  
"Out of the world of men  
Into the shades I go!"  
And he grimly laughed, when lo,  
A light on his pathway shone!

"Mine enemy's tower!" he said,  
As the beacon beckoned him. "Well,  
Succor were likely as bread  
To be had from a shard<sup>a</sup> or stone,  
Or meat from a wolf-gnawed bone,  
Or hope in the heart of hell!"

Yet he steered him sheer on the flare,  
With a "Here or there, 'tis one !  
A corpse in the morning air,  
Frozen as rigid as steel,  
Or a form on gibbet or wheel,—  
What matters it how 'tis done !"

He clanged a summons clear,  
Keeping his grip on hate ;  
And he wavered not to hear  
A word from a tongue abhorred,—  
Then back swung the outer ward,  
And his enemy stood in the gate.

Eyes upon burning eyes  
Hung, as when war-fires rule  
Under the angry skies ;  
Then, ere the wrath-flame died,  
"Welcome !" his enemy cried,  
"For this is the eve of Yule."

Into the banquet-hall  
He was bid as a chosen guest ;  
And there before them all  
Did his enemy give him meat,  
And bread of the finest wheat,  
And golden wine of the best.



Then was he brought to a room  
Where rugs were soft on the floor,  
And a fire made fair the gloom ;  
And, warned with a stern behest  
Of the sacred rights of a guest,  
A guard was set at the door.

Through the black night-watches long  
Did he wait on sleep, but when  
Came the peal of the matin song  
No slumber had kissed his brow ;  
So he girded himself, for now  
The sunlight lay on the fen.

Then once more did his foe  
Proffer him drink and food ;  
Forth to the court below  
Did his enemy lead the way,  
Where, as one for a fray,  
Chafing, a charger stood.

“ Hate ! — it is burned into shame ;  
Scorn ! — of myself is the scorn ;  
Blame ! — I confess to the blame ;  
Vengeance is thine ! ” he said,  
And with averted head  
He rode out into the morn.

## The Hanging of the Holly

The holly is for happiness ;  
Hang it, hang it high,  
When the holy morn we bless  
Shows its rose along the sky !

The holly is for heartsome cheer ;  
Hang it, hang it high,  
While the glory of the year  
Lights the heights of all the sky !

The holly is for home-side mirth ;  
Hang it, hang it high,  
Till the dearest day of earth  
Fades in shades along the sky !

## The Maid of Bethlehem

It was a maid of Bethlehem ; —  
As fair as spring was she  
When first lifts up its fragile cup  
The rathe anemone.

It was a man of Bethlehem ; —  
As dark of heart was he  
As is night's Stygian shadow cast  
Upon the lone Dead Sea.

He fawned where'er she set her foot,  
He followed her like fate ;  
And when she sealed his lips with scorn,  
He held a tryst with hate.

And then, as venom through the veins,  
Through Bethlehem there ran  
A whispered malice in the air  
That spread from man to man.

"And shall this living lie endure?"  
In rising rage, they said ;  
"The purging fire shall work a cure  
Upon her sinful head !"

It was the maid of Bethlehem,  
In all her stainless grace,  
They seized before the House of God  
Within the market-place.

It was the man of Bethlehem  
Who led the throng elate  
That bore her out with mocking shout  
Beyond the city gate.

Around her heaped they fagots high,  
And touched the pile with flame;  
"Behold!" they cried, "the wanton witch!  
She expiates her shame!"

"O sinless One of Calvary,"  
Then did they hear her say,  
"Prove Thou my blameless innocence  
On this, Thy natal day!"

Lo, as she spake, each fiery tongue  
Leaped on her foe of foes,  
The while from charred and smoking boughs  
Burst rose on crimson rose!

It was the man of Bethlehem  
Who died in agony;  
It was the maid of Bethlehem  
Who went unharmed and free.

## The Christmas Almsman

It was a Christmas almsman  
Came to a palace door;  
The flambeaux flared, the music blared,  
And gleamed the waxen floor.

“Out on thee, for a vagrant!”  
A pompous porter cried;  
“Quick, get thee gone ere goads be drawn  
To scourge thy tattered hide!”

The mirth roared to the rafter,  
With plenty groaned the board,  
Yet naught they gave that almsman gaunt  
Save flaunting fleer and ribald taunt,  
Despite his bare and bitter want,  
From all their Yule-tide hoard!

It was a Christmas almsman  
Unto a hovel came;  
The walls so grim were drear and dim  
With one pale candle flame.

Yet spake the kindly hoveler  
Who saw the beggar's face:  
"You're welcome here, though lean our cheer;  
Enter, and bide a space!"

He shambled in; he crouched him down;  
He ate their meagre fare;  
And lo, they found, when he had sped,  
A scrip of gold and jewels red!  
*The hoveler had housed and fed  
An angel unaware!*

## The Bells of Christmas

"Pilgrim, you of the loosened lachet,  
What do you hear as you roam and roam?"

"Master, I list to the bells of Christmas,  
The bells of Christmas, calling me home !

"They call and call, and I fain would hasten  
Back to the warmth of the old roof-tree,  
To the plentiful board and the merry faces,  
And the twilight prayer at the mother's knee !"

"Pilgrim, you of the loosened lachet,  
Why, then, still do you roam and roam?"

"Master, 'twas but a dream they conjured,  
The bells of Christmas, calling me home.

"'Twas but a vision out of the distance,  
Happy and holy and sweet, forsooth !  
'Twas but a vision out of the distance,  
Out of the long lost vale of Youth !"

"Pilgrim, you of the loosened lachet,  
All of us have our dreams like thee,  
And back are borne by the bells of Christmas  
To the twilight prayer at the mother's knee !"

## Christmas Ingle Song

Now once more the year has run  
(Sun succeeding sceptred sun)  
To the time of hallowed birth,  
To the holiest tide of earth;  
Out with sadness ! out with sin !  
Let us hail the Christ-Child in !

While we lift our thanks for thrift,  
Praise the giver and the gift,  
With the holly, berried bright,  
Druid ivy sprays unite ! —  
Long they both have sacred been ;  
Let us hail the Christ-Child in !

And the back-log, — let it be  
From some ancient forest tree  
Great of girth, that flames may roar  
Up the chimney high and hoar,  
Thus to swell our merry din ;  
Let us hail the Christ-Child in !

Far into the night with song  
Let us the old rites prolong !  
Cry, "Noel ! noel ! noel !"  
Until peals the midnight bell !  
If we peace and love would win,  
Let us hail the Christ-Child in !



## Neil MacDonald

"Whither away, O Neil MacDonald?

Whither away so fleet hie ye?"

"I have a tryst to keep, my mother,

Under the boughs of the holly tree!"

"Go ye not, O Neil MacDonald !

Go ye not, prithee ! prithee !"

"I must keep the tryst, my mother,

Under the boughs of the holly tree !"

Into the night leaps Neil MacDonald ;

Every man has a weird to dree ;

He will dree his weird this Yule-tide

Under the boughs of the holly tree.

In the north the pale auroras

Flash and waver spectrally ;

But the purple shadows slumber

Under the boughs of the holly tree.

Over the burn bounds Neil MacDonald ;

Through the bracken plunges he ;

He has won to the purple shadows

Under the boughs of the holly tree.

"O my love!" cries Neil MacDonald;  
"O my love! my love!" cries she;  
And their lips are met together  
Under the boughs of the holly tree.

Bitter the frost upon the moor-side,  
Bitter the frost, but what recks he,  
With his arms about Fiorna  
Under the boughs of the holly tree!

"What is that I hear, beloved?  
What is that dark shape I see?"  
"You but dream, my Neil MacDonald,  
Under the boughs of the holly tree."

"He dreams not, your Neil MacDonald,  
Sister, false as the falsest be!"  
Hark! — the clan-call of MacGregor  
Under the boughs of the holly tree!

Hark! — the clan-call of MacGregor! —  
Every man has a weird to dree!  
He has dreed his, Neil MacDonald,  
Under the boughs of the holly tree.

## The Star of Bethlehem

Out of the past's black night  
There shines one star  
Whose light  
Is more than countless constellations are.

High in the east it gleams;—  
This radiant star  
Whose beams  
Are more to man than all the planets are.

Still be thy light displayed,  
O Bethlehem star,  
Nor fade  
Until the circling systems no more are !

## Pierol's Christmas

Into the hall on the night of Yule  
Capered the jester, blithe Pierol,  
Crying merrily, "Gifts for a fool!"  
Sooth, right well did he play the role,  
Though the wolf of bitterness gnawed his soul!

Proud his birth as the proudest there, —  
Count or baron or haughty knight,  
But poverty was his sorry share, —  
A lonely tower on a barren height  
(And a wit as bright as his purse was light).

So under the motley he hid his name;  
Under the motley he hid his heart;  
But he could not hide nor he could not tame  
His leaping spirit that would out-start,  
Nor his face, — Endymion's counterpart.

"Gifts for a fool!" Troth, they loved him well, —  
Loved his beauty and blithesomeness,  
Loved his quips and lyric spell  
Of the songs he sang with so gay a stress,  
And his head thrown back like a hawk in jess!

So they tossed him, — this one a golden chain,  
That one a bracelet, another a ring ;  
Till out of all of that feasting train  
There was only a maid who had failed to fling  
Some bauble to him, — some costly thing.

And she, — how fair like the thorn in May  
She seemed as she sat in her stainless guise !—  
As he paused in his pirouetting gay,  
Caught to heart the look in his fearless eyes  
That were fixed upon her in yearning wise ;

And raising a hand, — ne'er was shapelier  
By prince or paladin won, I wis,  
In the shock of the lists, or the silken stir  
Of the courts of Love who is queen of bliss !—  
She cast him the honeyed boon of a kiss.

“ Gifts — for a — fool ! ” far, fainter the cry  
Drooped in the distance to quaver and shift,  
A moment to linger, and then to die.  
Of all that meed of a jester's thrift  
Which to Pierol was the dearest gift ?

## Song for the Eve of Yule

Here's a fig for Melancholy,  
Now the year is at the Yule !  
Welcome Fun and welcome Folly !  
Welcome anything that's jolly !  
What say you, sweet Mistress Molly,  
Shall not Love and Laughter rule ?

Come and close about the ingle  
While the caverned chimney roars !  
Song and merriment shall mingle  
Till the very rafters tingle;  
Then shall sound the jangle-jingle  
Of the sleigh-bells at the doors !

Out upon all frowning faces !  
Out upon the ghost of Gloom !  
In with games and glees and graces !  
Loose (for once) smug Custom's traces ;  
Put old Momus through his paces !  
Give the merry maskers room !

Aye, a fig for Melancholy !  
Garland Love, let Laughter rule !  
Hail to Fun and hail to Folly !  
Hail the jovial and the jolly !  
Shall we not, sweet Mistress Molly,  
Now the year is at the Yule !

## The Three Kings

Came those monarchs, grave and hoar,  
With their gifts, a goodly store,  
Gold and frankincense and myrrh,  
On that holy night of yore, —

Ator, Sator, Sarasin,  
In their hallowed purpose kin,  
Following the guiding star,  
Each a sacred goal to win.

Did they bear their offerings,  
Such a wealth of precious things, —  
Unto one of princely place,  
Sprung, like them, from earthly kings?

Nay, but to an infant born  
In a lowly spot forlorn  
Yet around whose glorious face  
Shone a halo like the morn!

For a spirit unto each  
Spake in no uncertain speech,  
Saying, "In a manger lies  
One who God to man shall teach;

One who shall the night o'erthrow,  
Bearing heaven with Him below,—  
Love that triumphs over hate,  
Peace and joy that conquer woe.”

So those monarchs, men of fame,  
Bowed before Him, blessed His name,  
Laid their offerings at His feet,  
Passed as swiftly as they came.

Stretch the years, a checkered chart,  
Since they played their deathless part,  
Yet to-day may we, like them,  
Giving, hold the Christ at heart.



## The Wise Men

The Wise Men wander across the wold,  
(O the Star in the sky !)

Bearing their goodly gifts of gold.

(How the low wind whispereth by !

Whispereth

Of birth, not death,

With joy in its lifted cry !)

The Wise Men come unto Bethlehem ;

(O the Star in the sky !)

A star is the beacon that guideth them.

(How the soft wind hasteneth by !

Hasteneth

The while it saith,

“O the Light of the World is nigh !”)

The Wise Men kneel at the infant's feet,

(O the Star in the sky !)

And the loving mother smileth sweet.

(While the wind it hurrieth by,—

Hurrieth

As it gladly saith,

“O the Hope of the World is high !”)

The Wise Men rise, and they go their ways ;  
    (O the Star in the sky !)  
And all this happed in the ancient days.  
    ( But the wind still gladdeneth by,—  
        Gladdeneth  
        At the death of Death, ,  
    That Life hath the victory !)

## A Yule Song

Who cries 'tis folly to wreath the bright holly?  
Who is it scoffs at the mistletoe bough?  
Marry, then, out on him ! marry, then, flout on him !  
If there's a time to be jolly, 'tis now !

Berry-tide, cherry-tide, each is a merry tide,  
And there's charm in the nutting, I vow !  
But none surpasses, — how say you, my lasses? —  
The time for up-hanging the mistletoe bough !

Reason, — away with it ! Men have grown gray with it,  
Pondering why and considering how ;  
We have no part in it, — nay, and no heart in it ! —  
Under the droop of the mistletoe bough !

So, lads, your choices all ! Lift, maids, your voices all !  
Love levels prince with the man at the plough.  
We'll make our boast of it, we'll make our toast of it, —  
Ne'er may it wither, the mistletoe bough !

## The Christmas Hunter

With blare of horn and holloa,  
Who is it forth doth fare?  
It is the Christmas Hunter  
Who rides adown the air.

Upon his wild steed, Sleipnir,  
He storms across the sky;  
And like the moan of ocean  
His vanguard surges by.

They are the Judas-hearted,—  
They are the souls of them  
That spurned God's own anointed,  
The Man of Bethlehem.

For them nor peace nor joyance  
At this high tide of Yule,  
Since they are doomed to follow  
The Hunter's iron rule.

Rage fills his veins with riot  
When peals the Christmas mirth,  
For memory bears him backward  
When he had power on earth.

So mad he whirls his minions  
    Behind him fast and far,  
Without or pause or pity,  
    From star to utmost star.

The once almighty Odin  
    Whom Christ hurled from his height,  
He is the Christmas Hunter  
    Who roams the voids of night.

## A Christmas Song

O'er the wastes the crows are calling —

*Caw! Caw!*

In the hedges of the haw,

Sparrows with their merry clatter

Cheep and chatter,—

*Naught's the matter!*

*Marry, marry! naught's the matter!*

Then it's ho! heigh-ho!

All the waking world's aglow!

And the mirthful bells of Christmas

Ring across the snow!

Down the garden Colin's calling —

*Mollie! Mollie!*

In the thickets of the holly

Choruses the hidden starling,

Saucy darling!

*You're behind her!*

*Kiss her, kiss her, when you find her!*

Then it's ho! heigh-ho!

Who's for worry, who's for woe,

When the wooing bells of Christmas

Ring across the snow?

## A Lover to His Rhyme

Go seek her out, my rhyme,  
Her of the cruel heart,  
And with your softest chime,  
And with your blandest art,  
Plead that this merry time  
May see her frowns depart.

And whisper, ah, so low ! —  
( And mark ye if she sigh ! )  
That sprays of mistletoe  
Are plucked to hang on high,  
That holly berries glow,  
That Christmas-tide is nigh.

And if ye win one smile,  
O speed ye hither swift !  
From eyes cast down the while  
The aching gloom will lift,  
And in the orchard aisle  
Will flower the frozen drift.

More I that ray will prize  
Than pearls of orient birth ;  
' Twill set the wintry skies  
A-dazzle over earth ;  
And love, in lilies guise,  
Will light the Christmas hearth.

## The Christmas Pilgrimage

(Bethlehem)

What means this waiting throng?  
Whence have these weary, way-worn wanderers come?  
Why rises, in strange tongues, the expectant hum,  
Like that tense under-song  
The joyful Jordan voices in the spring  
Till Hermon hearkens, leaning grandly down,  
And wearing still his shimmering snowy crown?  
Soon will these murmuring lips with ardor sing,  
And soon these lifted faces, wan or brown,  
Glow into worship that is rapturing.  
Back will be thrown the consecrated door,  
And then these feet, from many a distant shore,  
Be privileged to press the hallowed floor.

Why have they come, — the hardy mountaineer  
From Lebanon's cedars and their checkered shade?  
The merchant and the snowy-mantled maid  
Who hold great Nilus dear?  
Why have they come, — the men with restless eyes  
And pallid cheeks that tell of norland skies?  
Why have they come, — the Latin and the Greek?  
Do pilgrims thus this sanctuary seek  
Because 'twas here  
For year on fiery year  
The red earth drank  
The deluged blood of Paynim and of Frank?



Or do they surge to see  
The antique symmetry  
Of springing arch and carven pillar fine,  
In this old holy house of Constantine?

Ah, no ! ah, no ! To them the memory  
Of war is not, and monarchs play no part  
In any thought that stirs an eager heart.  
They have no eyes to see  
A single graceful groining. What care they  
If here, upon a bygone Christmas-day,  
The King-crusader, Baldwin, took his crown !  
Or what to them the saint of blest renown  
In yonder sepulchre, now crumbling clay !  
Their patient feet one precious spot would press,  
Their yearning eyes would lovingly caress  
The time-dulled silver star  
Sunk deep within the pavement, footfall-worn :  
“ *Here, of the Virgin Mary, Christ was born,*”  
They read, these pilgrims who have plodded far.  
They read and pass and ponder. Few can see  
The tiny chapel and the dim-lit shrine,  
And feel no thrill, despite the mummery,  
Of something more divine  
Within the breast than ever pulsed before.  
Then let us pilgrims be  
Upon this sacred day we all adore !  
Although our mortal feet touch not the floor,

Although our mortal eyes may not behold,  
Our spirits may take flight,  
And with immortal sight  
Stand where the prayerful wise-men stood of old  
In ecstasy of adoration, when  
They saw the Savior of the sons of men.

## The Yule-Log

Hale the Yule-log in !  
Heap the fagots high !  
With a merry din  
Rouse old Revelry !  
Cry "Noel ! Noel !"   
Till the rafters ring,  
And the gleeful bell  
Peals its answering !

Brim the Christmas cup  
From the wassail-bowl,  
Now the flame leaps up  
With its ruddy soul !  
In the glowing blaze  
How the dancers spin !  
Deftest in the maze,  
Nimble Harlequin !

Grim Snapdragon comes  
With his mimic ire,  
And his feast of plums  
Smothered in the fire.  
O the days of mirth,  
And the nights akin !  
Heap the Christmas hearth ;  
Hale the Yule-log in !

## Ballad of the Christmas Tryst

“ It ’s hey ! my merry huntsman,  
With hound and hawk and horn,  
Where hie ye to the hunting  
This crispy Christmas morn ? ”

“ It ’s ho ! mine ancient gossip,  
To Wildmere wood I go,  
To seek beneath the boughs of Yule  
The roebuck and the roe. ”

“ It ’s ha ! my merry huntsman,  
A cunning tongue have ye ;  
With deer ye keep no Christmas tryst  
Beneath the greenwood-tree. ”

“ It ’s hist ! mine ancient gossip,  
I prithee, speak me low,  
Lest they that love me not should hear  
To Wildmere wood I go. ”

“ It ’s list ! my merry huntsman,  
They wot thy coming well,  
And wait thee where the pathway dips  
To cross the birken dell. ”

"It 's good ! mine ancient gossip,  
How many may there be  
Betwixt me and my Christmas tryst  
Beneath the greenwood-tree?"

"It 's hark ! my merry huntsman,  
There's Bernard of the Bow,  
Sir Egbert of the Crooked Arm,  
And Giles of Clariveaux ;

"There's Giles, my merry huntsman,  
The wiliest of men,  
Brother in blood, though black his heart,  
To one whose name ye ken."

"Gramercy ! ancient gossip,  
And shall these stay my foot?  
Then may the House of Hardigrave  
Be withered to the root !"

He gave his page his hound in leash,  
His hawk and eke his horn,  
And gaily did he onward ride  
Beneath the Christmas morn.

And now the birken dell was won,  
And now the shallow ford,  
And now he heard the scabbard ring  
Its answer to the sword.

And forth from out the coppice deep  
Rode Bernard of the Bow,  
Sir Egbert of the Crooked Arm,  
And Giles of Clariveaux.

Small parley was there then, God wot,  
But bickering of steel,  
And down clashed Bernard of the Bow  
Beneath his charger's heel.

And Egbert of the Crooked Arm  
Reeled sidewise as he knew  
The sharp bite of a falchion's point  
His stricken harness through.

Then clear rang out the huntsman's shout,  
Right merrily cried he,  
"God's with the son of Hardigrave  
Who loves *La Belle Marie*!"

Oh, deep cursed Giles of Clariveaux  
To hear his sister's name,  
While 'neath his vizor burned his eyes  
Like orbs of evil flame!

"Have at thee, Hardigrave!" he hissed,  
"This riding thou shalt rue!"  
And round them like a fiery mist  
The spiteful sparks outflew.

'Twas parry, cut and counter-cut,  
And fiercer-faced the while  
Grew treacherous Giles of Clariveaux  
To mark the huntsman's smile.

And seeing he was sore beset,  
That urgent grew his need,  
He aimed a caitiff's coward blow  
To maim his foeman's steed.

But vain that cruel, craven thrust,  
For whiles he strove to rein  
The shoulder of his sword-arm  
Was riven half in twain.

\* \* \* \* \*

O starling in the thicket, see  
Where, eyes with love aglow,  
Adown the forest pathway goes  
The rose of Clariveaux !

And hearken, O ye holly boughs !  
And, O ye larches, list !  
It is the song of one who rides  
To keep his Christmas tryst.

## A Knight's Christmas

I hear the shrilling hautboys sound,  
The thrilling drums take up the din,  
And through the doorway's gaping bound  
A lusty, mincing manikin  
Bears, garlanded, the boar's head in.

The great bells clamor in the tower  
Their jubilation. Down the hall  
Mirth bursts into a brilliant flower  
Of quip and toast and madrigal ;  
"Noel ! Noel ! Noel !" cry all.

And yet joy seems a thing foredone  
Forevermore in every place  
Beneath the red rays of the sun ;—  
What is Christ's mass that wrought man grace  
Without the favor of love's face !



## The White Ladye

"The flax upon your distaff  
Is yellow as your hair,  
But why, on Christmas even,  
Thus spin you, maiden fair?

"The joy-bells in the steeples  
Are ringing clear and wide;  
O stop the whirring spindle,  
And put the flax aside!"

"Nay, but I may not, master,  
Although I weary be,  
Lest through the open shutter  
Should peer the White Ladye;

"And find my treadle idle,  
My flax in tangled fold,  
And on the merry morrow  
Forget her gift of gold.

"For to the slothful virgin  
She causeth sorrowing,  
But to the thrifty maiden  
A blessing she doth bring!"

A soft touch at the shutter,—  
A face divine to see!  
It is the fairy spinner,  
It is the White Ladye!

## The Wizard People

Adown the ways of winter,  
Above the vasts of snow,  
With woven flame their sandals shod,  
Through airy wastes by paths untrod,  
The wizard people go.

By day their feats are hidden,  
But night beholds their mirth,  
When in the abysses of the air  
Their sorceries they flaunt and flare  
Above a wondering earth.

In vain the hilltops hearken,  
Their lips no sound reveal ;  
But ever on, from arc to arc,  
Across the spangled depths of dark  
Their pennons whirl and wheel.

Why come they ? Who can answer ?  
Whence go they ? Who can tell ?  
Flaming and fading down the night,  
A mystery, a dream-delight,  
A splendor and a spell !

Such are the wizard people,  
The brethren of the pole ;  
And though man long has sought to gain  
Their secret, suns shall wax and wane  
Ere he shall read their soul !

## Holly Song

Care is but a broken bubble,  
Trill the carol, troll the catch !  
Sooth we'll cry, "A truce to trouble !"  
Mirth and mistletoe shall match !

*Happy folly ! we'll be jolly !  
Who'd be melancholy now ?  
With a "Hey, the holly ! ho, the holly !"  
Polly hangs the holly bough.*

Laughter lurking in the eye, sir,  
Pleasure foots it frisk and free ;  
He who frowns or looks awry, sir,  
Faith, a witless wight is he !

*Merry folly ! what a volley  
Greets the hanging of the bough !  
With a "Hey, the holly ! ho, the holly !"  
Who'd be melancholy now ?*

## Gennesar

Bright 'neath the Syrian sun, dim 'neath the Syrian  
star,

Thus lieth Galilee's sea, sapphirine lake Gennesar ;

Girdled by mountains that range purple and proud to  
their crests,

Bearing the burden of dreams, — glamour of eld, —  
on their breasts.

Just one white glint of a sail dotting the brooding  
expanse ;

Beaches that sparkle and gleam, ripples that darkle  
and dance ;

Grandeur and beauty and peace welded year-long  
into one,

Under the Syrian star, under the Syrian sun !

And over all and through all memories sweet of His  
name

Kindling the past with their light, touching the  
future with flame !

## Firelight

Whene'er at evening on the pictured wall  
I watch the flickering firelight rise and fall,  
From out the shifting shadow-vistas come  
The forms of those who marched to martyrdom,—  
Unflinching souls no agony could tame,  
A martyr wraith for every tongue of flame!

## Mother-of-Pearl

Mother-of-pearl out of Bethlehem,  
Irradiant with all rainbow lights,—  
Shimmering, shifting opal whites,  
The June-time rose's palest fire,  
The sunset's most translucent gold,—  
Delicate as a precious gem  
Shaped for a lover's heart's desire,  
Glowing as morn, yet virgin cold !

Mother-of-pearl out of Bethlehem,  
Thus I read you, bending above  
Your sheen, more fair than the breast of a dove ;—  
The white is the Mother without a stain ;  
And the blended hues, the fire and the gold,  
They stand for Him who for diadem  
Had a crown of thorns, and was basely slain,—  
The Son of God clad in mortal mould !

## The Bells of Ardo

By wide gray orchards girdled,  
And cloistered deep in vines,  
Remote stood ancient Ardo  
Amid the Apennines.

Below her banded belfries  
That loomed above the land  
For weeks gaunt Plague and Famine  
Had walked with linkèd hand.

Until, when neared the Yule-tide,  
On pale lips swooned the prayer,  
And only sounds of wailing  
Swept down the bitter air.

No heart had any ringer  
To sound the joyful bells;  
The soaring campanile  
Pealed naught but burial knells.

So when the Christmas sunlight  
Scattered the chill white haze  
The sorely scourgèd people  
Were smitten with amaze

Hearing from San Stefano,—  
A spire and shrine forlorn,—  
A glorious jubilate  
Salute the startled morn.



Fast flocked the folk, and wonder  
Swelled high that dawning hour,  
For unseen hands were swinging  
The bells within the tower.

And 'twixt their rhythmic chiming,  
Word upon precious word,  
A vibrant voice of promise  
In solemn wise was heard ;

"This day," it cried, "my people,  
The cruel curse shall cease,  
And there shall fall upon you  
My benison of peace !"

When failed the silvery bell-notes  
Till arch and aisle were still,  
'Twas found that all in Ardo  
Were healed of every ill.

And now, as Christmas morning  
Breaks over street and square  
The bells of San Stefano  
Ring out upon the air ;

And still the gathered people  
Lift praise with glad accord  
Unto the One almighty  
That was their fathers' Lord.

## In the Age of the Year

Is it the wizard wind  
That has shriveled the quince's rind?  
Sooth, we know it was he  
Who shook the leaves from the tree  
And danced them out of breath  
Till they wizened away in death !  
Strange and subtile powers  
Have rule of these ashen hours,  
Binding the stricken sphere  
In this, the age of the year.

Through the crispèd grass and the husk  
Rustle the feet of the Dusk ;  
And the only song we know  
Is the back-log's murmur low.  
Then come, and sit with me  
By the side of Memory  
And Love, with the bluet skies  
In her spring-reverting eyes,  
And there shall be vernal cheer  
In this, the age of the year !

## A Lover's Christmas

Fade the last embers in the year's chill urn ;  
Ah, love, how red the holly berries burn !

A shroud of ermine hides the meadow ways ;  
Ah, love, how green are still the ivy sprays !

Black are the boughs against a sky of gray ;  
Ah, love, how golden is the Yule-log's ray !

Behind the wood the sad wind plainteth long ;  
Ah, love, the mirth within the mummer's song !

In garth and orchard naught but gloom and dearth ;  
Ah, love, the joy about the Christmas hearth !

Winter's white woe, its bitter sting and smart —  
Ah, love, the love aye vernal, in the heart !

## Ballad of Kirkland Hills

The grand old hills of Kirkland  
    Stood up against the morn,  
As o'er a rutty road there strode  
    A pilgrim lean and lorn.

The wood-crowned hills of Kirkland,  
    They notched the wan blue sky,  
As toward that plodding pilgrim came  
    A horseman urging by.

"I prithee, weary pilgrim,  
    Now whither dost thou roam?"

"I seek a gabled farmstead set  
    Amid these hills of home;

"I seek an ancient rooftree set  
    Amid these uplands white."

"God give thee luck," the horseman cried,  
    "Before this Christmas night!"

The kindly hills of Kirkland,  
    They saw, when broad noon shone  
Above the fair Oriska vale,  
    This pilgrim toiling on.

The hemlocks preened their night-dark plumes  
As up and up he clomb ;  
The same old rook-calls welcomed him  
Back to the hills of home.

High on the hills of Kirkland  
Where hale the north-wind roared,  
O gay were they that grouped about  
The heaped Christmas board !

And yet the brooding mother,  
With smiles she hid the tear  
For one whose lips she had not kissed  
This many a lonely year ;

For one whose wander-lust had led  
His roving spirit far,  
Until she dreamed he slept beneath  
The clear Alaskan star.

Hark, at the door a summons !  
A step upon the sill !  
O mother-eyes abrim with joy,  
And mother-heart athrill !

And O ye hills of Kirkland,  
In wintry white and gray,  
A gladder sight ye never saw  
On any Christmas day !

## The Closed Room

In the marvelous house of life  
Each year is a closed room ;  
It is filled with peace and strife,  
It is packed with glow and gloom.

There are hopes in the hues of dream,  
There are cares in their grim array,  
There are pleasures that glint and gleam,  
And sorrows in drugget gray.

For some, with his infinite grace,  
Love waits when the portal jars ;  
For some, with his sphinx-like face,  
Death stands when the door unbars.

Some back from the threshold shrink,  
As loath from the past to part ;  
But the most plunge over the brink  
With never a fear at heart.

Then silent closes the door  
At the sound of the last old chime,  
And the key — Forevermore —  
Is turned by the keeper — Time !

## Under the Holly Bough

When the hale year laughed in the prime of May,  
And each path was a lure to the truant eye,  
When the south-wind sang: "Come away! Come  
away!"

(Ah, but the blue of a vernal sky!)  
When the vireo's voice was a lyric cry,  
'Twas the bloom o' the apple beckoned us; now  
When we meet, my sweet, for the trysting, why,  
'Tis under the green of the holly bough!

When the meadows swooned in the dazzling day,  
And the hilltops seemed in a dream to lie,  
When shrill was the locust's roundelay,  
(Ah, but the glow of a summer sky!)  
When the stream-song sank to a rippling sigh,  
'Twas the pleach o' the elm-leaves beckoned us; now  
When we meet, my sweet, for the trysting, why,  
'Tis under the green of the holly bough!

When the woodland gleamed like a prismatic ray,  
And the distance drowsed in a golden dye,  
When vineyard and orchard aisles were gay  
(Ah, but the depths of an autumn sky!)

With stains like a web of Tyrian ply,  
'Twas the flame o' the maple beckoned us; now  
When we meet, my sweet, for the trysting, why,  
'Tis under the green of the holly bough!

#### ENVOY

Spring, summer and autumn have all sped by,  
(Ah, but the chill of a winter sky!)  
Yet love still calls to the tryst, and now  
'Tis under the green of the holly bough!



## Cosette's Christmas

Cosette they called her ; Cosette, that was all ;  
Fragile she was and flower-like, slim and tall  
For her eleven years, wherein her heart  
Had known but little save the world's sharp smart.  
Never her ear had heard a mother's croon ;  
Never for her, about the break of June,  
Had been outstretched a father's shielding hand  
To guide her woodward through the smiling land.  
The streets oppressed her with their cruel roar ;  
The birds she saw above her dart and soar,  
Theirs was the life she longed for, not to be  
Mewed within walls that were a gloom to see,  
And stung with taunts from a virago tongue  
That aged her spirit yearning to be young.  
Foundling,—a fate that brooked of no appeal  
Was hers by some inexorable seal.

Backward and forward oft she went and came  
From the grim spot, that was but home in name,  
On casual errandry. It chanced one day,  
As she passed swiftly on her timid way,  
( 'Twas near the season of the Christ-child's birth,  
The happy tide of peace and love on earth )  
A heedless hand struck from her feeble grasp  
The glass she strove so carefully to clasp,

And she beheld it, with a plaintive cry,  
Shattered before her on the pavement lie.  
The throng swept by, and caught her in its swirl;  
There was no lip to soothe the sobbing girl,  
No kindness to aid her. A great fear  
Clutched at her breast; she knew the stabbing jeer,  
The pitiless blows that waited her when she  
Told the ill outcome of her errandry.  
Then through her brain there flashed a sudden word  
That in the hive-like purlieus she had heard,  
And filled her mind with sunshine. No affright  
Touched her with chill at thought of death's dim night,  
For she recalled how once the preacher said  
That in white lily-gardens walk the dead.  
So in she stole at the accustomed door,  
Sought out a room upon the lower floor  
Wherein the porter, sullen-visaged, slept;  
Toward a remembered drawer on tiptoe crept,  
Plucked, undetected, thence a shining thing,  
And gained again the street in triumphing.  
A ringing shot, a little piteous moan,  
And a child's blood encrimsoning the stone!  
When Cosette oped her heavy-lidded eyes,  
Wonder assailed her, and a great surmise.  
Was this the lily-land of her delight?  
It shone so bare, and yet so very white!  
Long stainless walls and little cots in rows,  
And one whose smile invited to repose;

She drowsed, her mind still dwelling on that face,  
And dreamed she'd found the angels' sleeping-place.  
And when, next day, they told her where she lay,  
A tiny tear-drop found its mournful way  
Adown the death-like pallor of her cheek ;  
She closed her eyes and sighed, but did not speak.

Dawn followed dawn, and still the little one  
Went not to that dim bourn beyond the sun,  
But ever seemed about to pass thereto ;  
Nearer and nearer now the Yule-tide drew,  
And to the hospital one morn there strayed  
A kindly man who made the news his trade,  
And learned the piteous story of the maid.  
" Cosette, " he said, with a strange catch of tone,  
His sight grown dim, remembering his own,  
" Have you no wish ? " and she, with him at ease,  
Cried, — " Two red roses and an orange, please ! "

*Just two red roses and an orange !* So  
He wrote next day that all the town might know ;  
Then Christmas morning broke above the snow.  
The morn of Christmas broke ; bell spoke to bell  
The loving message of " good-will " to tell ;  
The postmen bustled on their burdened round ;  
And happy greetings rang with cordial sound.  
Then, at the hospital, a summons came,  
Another and another, and the name  
The answering nurse with every message met

Was still "Cosette," and evermore "Cosette,"  
For all had read the story of the child.  
Roses upon her bed were strewn and piled,  
And breathed their June about her everywhere,  
Gleamed on the table, glistened on the chair,  
From the soft loveliness of the pale tea-rose  
To the deep splendor of the Jacqueminots.  
And oranges! forsooth, it was as though  
The palm-set lands where the long trade-winds blow,  
Fair Florida and the Lucayan shores,  
Had here unbosomed their most precious stores!  
Both rich and poor had sought to ease the smart  
Of her whose tale had touched the city's heart.  
And she—Cosette—through kindness' golden dower,  
Smiled upon life, and mended from that hour.

## Pilgrims

Their path who shall unravel,  
Their purpose who unroll?  
From out the past they travel,  
The future is their goal.

Theirs are the forward faces,  
The spring's Arcadian airs ;  
The old eternal graces  
Of youngling Time are theirs.

Or gold the sky or ashen,  
There broods within their breast  
The sleepless pilgrim passion,  
The sweet divine unrest.

They neither flag nor falter,  
They tarry not nor tire ;  
Their aim they will not alter  
Although a king desire.

They fear nor frost nor fever,  
Nor fire nor famine they ;  
They follow Fate, the weaver,  
For ever and a day.

Now tell their eyes the story  
Of more than mortal tears,  
Now gleam with starry glory,  
The passing pilgrim Years.





